

# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus

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### CONYERS CALLS THE CONDITIONS OF IMAM HADDAD'S CONFINEMENT "APPALLING"

Today, Congressman John Conyers, Jr. Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee issued the following statement following his visit with Imam Rabih Haddad who is being held at the Metropolitan Corrections Center in downtown Chicago:

"I have just met with Imam Rabih Haddad, a prominent religious leader who has been imprisoned in solitary confinement for the past two months. The treatment of Imam Haddad has highlighted everything that is abusive and unconstitutional about our government's scapegoating of immigrants in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

Imam Haddad is accused of having ties to Global Relief, a charitable organization whose millions of dollars in assets have been frozen based on secret evidence that it is linked to terrorism. This is a case of guilt by association where we haven't seen a shred of evidence that the accused party is guilty.

After being subjected to a closed immigration proceeding in Detroit- one that even I was not allowed to attend -- he was moved to Chicago where has been forced to live alone in a 6' X 9' cell. Here we have one of the most prominent members of the American Islamic community -- a man who helped bring about interfaith healing in the wake of the September terrorist attacks -- being detained without bond because the Attorney General believes he is a flight risk and a threat to the community because of the registered hunting rifle from K-Mart found in his home.

I am deeply disturbed that the Bush Administration is championing secret proceedings, the use of secret evidence and cruel conditions of confinement against a man with no criminal record who has publicly condemned the terrorist act against our country.

The conditions of Imam Haddad's confinement are appalling. Since announcing my plans to make an oversight visit, the INS has eased slightly on the telephone and visitation restrictions. Still, he lives in a poorly lit empty 6' x 9' cell and is only permitted to meet with his wife twice a week and call home 4 times a month. I will continue to do everything I can to push for improved conditions and express my contempt to the Justice Department for the manner in which they have treated Imam Haddad and his family.

I am also introducing legislation that would require INS proceedings to be open so that the public can hear the cases against those accused of violating the law. Closed proceedings are an anathema to our system of due process and are more akin to the treatment seen in a dictatorship than a constitutional democracy. The sixth amendment is clear -- "the accused shall enjoy the right to a public trial."

The attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> should not destroy our Constitution. Rather, they should strengthen our commitment to it. Imam Haddad is entitled to the full disclosure of any evidence against him. He should be released pending future proceedings unless the government can rely on something better than the lawful ownership of a gun by a man known to his friends as a compassionate, law-abiding individual who has made important contributions to the Michigan community."